

June 9, 2010

***Explanation of Vote by Ambassador Susan E. Rice, U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations, on the Security Council's Adoption of Resolution 1929, Imposing Sanctions on Iran, June 9, 2010***

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Thank you, Mr. President. Today the Security Council has responded decisively to the grave threat to international peace and security posed by Iran's failure to live up to its obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. This Treaty is the principal international legal instrument for holding member states accountable, discouraging the spread of nuclear weapons, and bringing the benefits of nuclear energy to all corners of the world. As President Obama has said, "Rules must be binding. Violations must be punished. Words must mean something."

The issue is straightforward. We are at this point because the Government of Iran has chosen clearly and willfully to violate its commitments to the IAEA and the resolutions of this Council. Despite consistent and longstanding demands by the international community, Iran has not suspended its uranium enrichment and other proliferation-related activities.

The Security Council has passed a resolution today aimed at reinforcing the need for Iran to take these steps and comply with its obligations. These sanctions are not directed at the Iranian people. Nor do the sanctions seek to stop Iran from the legitimate exercise of its rights under the NPT, in conformity with its obligations. Rather, the sanctions aim squarely at the nuclear ambitions of a government that has chosen a path that will lead to increased isolation.

These sanctions are as tough as they are smart and precise. This resolution prohibits Iran from investing in sensitive nuclear activities abroad. It imposes binding new restrictions on Iran's import of conventional arms. It bans all Iranian activities related to ballistic missiles that could deliver a nuclear weapon. It imposes a comprehensive framework of cargo inspections to detect and stop Iran's smuggling and acquisition of illicit materials or nuclear items. It creates important new tools to block Iran's use of the international financial system—particularly Iranian banks—to fund and facilitate nuclear proliferation. It highlights the potential links between Iran's energy sector and its nuclear ambitions. It targets the role of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps in Iran's proliferation efforts. It establishes a UN Panel of Experts to help monitor and enforce the implementation of sanctions. And it imposes targeted new sanctions, including asset freezes and travel bans, on 40 entities and an individual linked to Iranian nuclear proliferation.

Mr. President, since 2002, the International Atomic Energy Agency has sought to investigate serious concerns that Iran's nuclear program might have military dimensions. In 2003, the IAEA Board of Governors expressed "grave concern" that Iran had still not enabled the IAEA to assure member states that Iran had declared all of its nuclear material and activities.

For our part, the United States launched a sustained and serious effort starting early last year to engage with Iran on a range of issues of mutual concern, including these nuclear issues. The

United States has made detailed and specific openings to the Iranians, including personal and direct outreach by President Obama.

The United States strongly supports the peaceful use of the atom for energy and innovation. Like every nation, Iran has rights, but it also has responsibilities—and the two are inextricably linked.

Iran has shunned opportunity after opportunity to verify the peaceful nature of its nuclear program. In recent months, Iran has given us all more reason—not less—to suspect that its goal is to develop the ability to assemble a nuclear weapon. Last September, the world learned that Iran had secretly built another uranium-enrichment facility at Qom, in clear violation of Security Council resolutions and Iran's IAEA obligations. Last November, Iran announced that it would build 10 more such facilities. In February, Iran said that it would begin to enrich uranium to nearly 20 percent—moving closer to weapons-grade material. In May, the IAEA affirmed yet again that Iran is continuing its banned uranium enrichment and warned that Iran has amassed more than 2,400 kilograms of low-enriched uranium.

The resolution we passed today offers Iran a clear path toward the immediate suspension of these sanctions. The best way is also the easiest one: Iran must fulfill its international obligations, suspend its enrichment-related, reprocessing, and heavy-water-related activities, and cooperate fully with the IAEA. The United States reaffirms our commitment to engage in robust, principled, and creative diplomacy. We will remain ready to continue diplomacy with Iran and its leaders to make it clear how much they have to gain from acting responsibly and how much more they stand to lose from continued recklessness. Today's resolution does not replace those efforts. But it does support them.

Turkey and Brazil have worked hard to make progress on the Tehran Research Reactor proposal—efforts that reflect their leaders' good intentions to address the Iranian people's humanitarian needs while building more international confidence about the nature of Iran's nuclear program. My government will continue to discuss the Iranian-revised proposal and our concerns about it, as appropriate. But the Tehran Research Reactor proposal—then and now—does not respond to the fundamental, well-founded, and unanswered concerns about Iran's nuclear program. This resolution does.

Until the world's concerns with Iran's nuclear defiance are fully resolved, we must work together to ensure that the sanctions in this resolution are fully and firmly implemented. We must ensure that the development of the most devastating weapons ever devised by human science is proscribed by the most responsible controls ever produced by human government.

Last month, 189 countries came together to strengthen the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty as a cornerstone of global security. Today's resolution is an important part of that work. The NPT must remain at the center of our global effort to stop nuclear proliferation even as we pursue the ultimate goal of a world without nuclear weapons.

Mr. President, today, I'm proud to say that this Council has risen to its responsibilities. Now Iran should choose a wiser course.

Thank you, Mr. President.

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